

TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

									
Confidence Score	Mild Republican	Strong Republican	Mild Republican	Mild Republican	Mild Republican	Mild Republican	Mild Republican	Mild Republican	Mild Republican
Opinion Partners								✓	✓
Dissenting Minority									
Determining Majority									
Lone Dissenter									

- ▶ Number of justices: **9**
- ▶ Number of cases: **159**
- ▶ Percentage of cases with a unanimous ruling: **81.1% (129)**
- ▶ Justice most often writing the majority opinion: **Justice Keller (9)**
- ▶ Per curiam decisions: **116**
- ▶ Concurring opinions: **22**
- ▶ Justice with most concurring opinions: **Justice Keasler (6)**
- ▶ Dissenting opinions: **21**
- ▶ Justice with most dissenting opinions: **Justice Yeary (7)**

COURT CONTENTION

Opinion partners

In 2020, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals decided 13 cases 7-2. In seven of those cases, Justices Slaughter and Yeary were opinion partners in the dissent. Justices Slaughter and Yeary allied in dissent in ten opinions in 2020. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study Justices Slaughter and Yeary recorded Mild Republican Confidence Scores.

Dissenting minority/determining majority

In 2020, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals decided three cases 5-4. There was no consistent minority or majority in those cases. Each justice was in the minority in at least one of the cases decided by split decision.

Lone dissenter

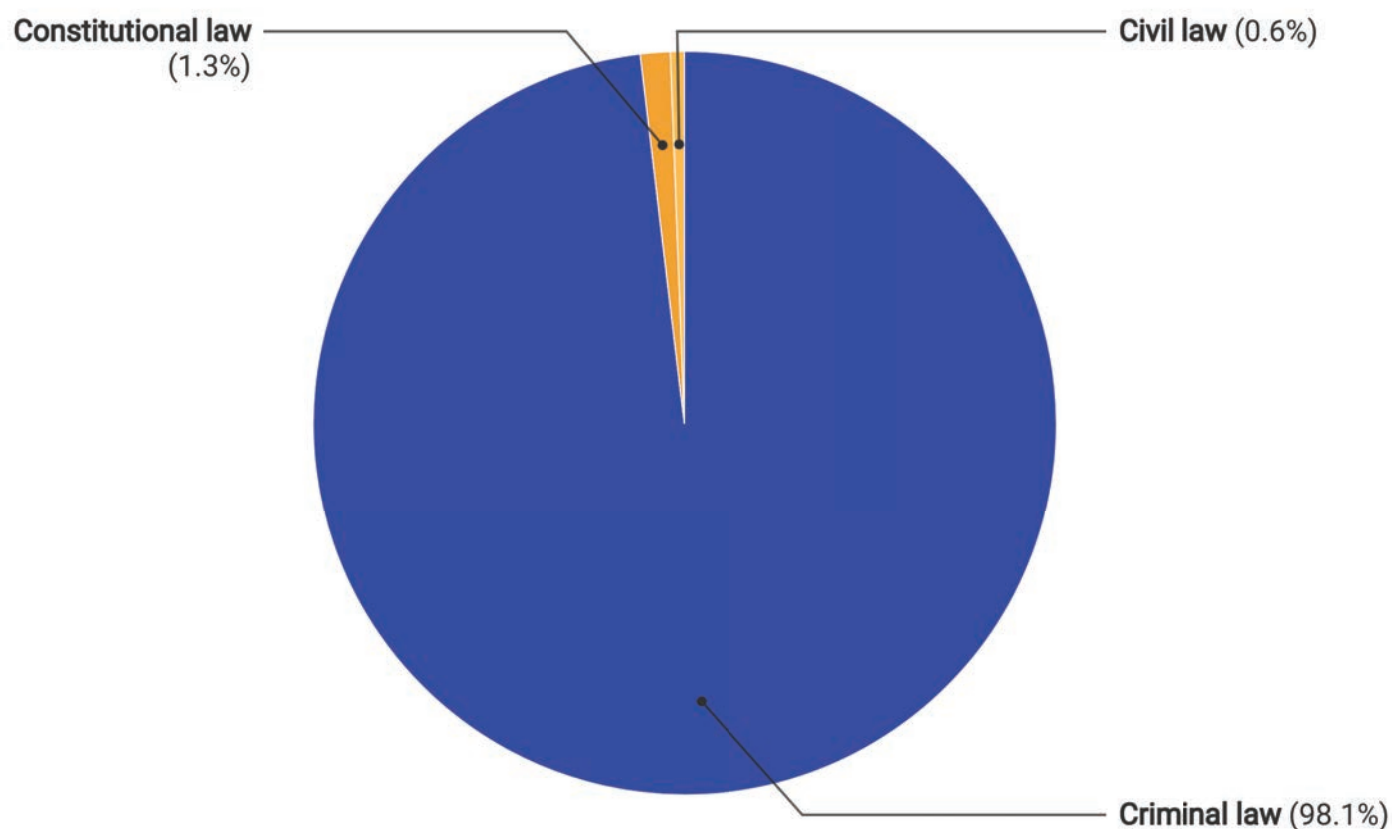
In 2020, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals decided six cases 8-1. No justice consistently dissented alone in those cases. Justice Walker and Justice Slaughter each dissented twice in cases decided 8-1.

COURT JURISDICTION

The Texas Supreme Court has jurisdiction over all civil cases, while the Court of Criminal Appeals exercises discretionary review over criminal cases. This means the court may choose whether or not to review a case. The only cases that the court must hear are those that involve sentencing decisions in capital punishment cases and other cases involving liberty issues, such as capital punishment cases, cases where bail has been denied and habeas cases where a prisoner or person being detained attempts to prove some constitutional right has been violated as a result of their detention. The court is based in the state capital, Austin, and includes nine judges. Article V of the Texas Constitution vests the judicial power of the state in the court, describes the court's jurisdiction, and details the rules for judicial eligibility, elections, and filling vacancies on the court between elections.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals hears both mandatory and discretionary cases. "All cases that result in the death penalty are automatically directed to the Court of Criminal Appeals from the trial court level. A significant portion of the Court's workload also involves the mandatory review of applications for post-conviction habeas corpus relief in felony cases without a death penalty, over which the Court has sole authority. In addition, decisions made by the intermediate courts of appeals in criminal cases may be appealed to the Court of Criminal Appeals by petition for discretionary review, which may be filed by the State, the defendant, or both. However, the Court may also review a decision on its own motion."

Case types decided by Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, 2020



BALLOTPEDIA

The most common cases heard by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in 2020 were criminal cases. Of the 159 cases it heard, 156 were criminal law cases, or 98.1 percent of its total caseload for the year. A criminal case involves a final criminal appeal before the court of last resort.

The second most common cases that reached the supreme court were constitutional cases. A constitutional case is one that involves the violation of a right expressly protected by the Constitution of the United States. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals heard two constitutional law cases in 2020, or 1.3 percent of its total caseload for the year.

The third most common cases that reached the court were civil cases. A civil case is one that involves a dispute between two parties, one of whom seeks reparations or damages. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals heard one civil law case in 2020, or less than one percent of its total caseload for the year.